

(NOTE: THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO CONFIRMATION BY THE JOINT COMMITTEE AT ITS NEXT MEETING)



**ERW Joint Committee
Tuesday, 9th February, 2021
Virtual Meeting
2.00 - 3.20 pm**

PRESENT: Councillor Emlyn Dole [Chair], Carmarthenshire County Council

Councillor Rob Stewart	Swansea City Council
Councillor Rosemarie Harris	Powys County Council
Councillor David Simpson	Pembrokeshire County Council
Councillor Ellen ap Gwynn	Ceredigion County Council
Mr Richard Brown	Pembrokeshire County Council
Dr Caroline Turner	Powys County Council
Mr Eifion Evans	Ceredigion County Council
Mr Phil Roberts	Swansea City Council
Councillor Phyl Davies	Powys County Council
Councillor Jennifer Raynor	Swansea County Council
Councillor Guy Woodham	Pembrokeshire County Council
Mr Jonathan Haswell	Pembrokeshire County Council (ERW – S151 Officer)
Ms Elin Prysor	Ceredigion County Council (ERW - Monitoring Officer)
Mr Stephen Richards-Downes	Pembrokeshire County Council (Deputy Lead Director)
Mr Aneirin Thomas	Carmarthenshire County Council
Mr Greg Morgan	ERW Chief Officer
Mr Ian Altman	ERW Chief Officer
Mr Ceri Davies	Pembrokeshire County Council (ERW - HR)
Ms Helen Lewis	Pembrokeshire County Council (ERW - HR)
Mr Matthew Holder	Pembrokeshire County Council (ERW – Internal Audit)
Ms Ruth Lee	ERW Business Support Manager
Ms Natalie Chambers	ERW Principal Accountant



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Ms Ffion Lloyd	Ceredigion County Council
Mr Mark Campion	ESTYN
Mr Alex Ingram	Welsh Government
Dr Chris Llewelyn	WLGA
Mrs Jessica Laimann	Carmarthenshire County Council (Democratic Services)
Mrs Rhian Lloyd	Carmarthenshire County Council (Democratic Services)
Ms Siwan Rees	Carmarthenshire County Council (Translation)
Mr Jonney Corner	Carmarthenshire County Council (Technical Support)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Wendy Walters (Carmarthenshire County Council), Gareth Morgans (Carmarthenshire County Council) and Joanne Hendy (Pembrokeshire County Council – ERW Audit).

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTERESTS

There were no declarations of personal interests made at the meeting.

3. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE HELD ON 13 NOVEMBER 2020

RESOLVED that the minutes of the ERW Joint Committee meeting held on 13 November 2020 be signed as a correct record.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES (IF ANY)

No matters were raised at the meeting.

5. CORRESPONDENCE

The Joint Committee received the following correspondence:

- Letter from Estyn, dated January 2021, with regard to the work of ERW between March and October 2020;
- Letter from the Chair of the ERW Scrutiny Councillor Group to the Chair of the Joint Committee reflecting on views following the last meeting of the ERW Scrutiny Councillor Group on the 26th November 2020;
- Draft response from the Chair of the Joint Committee in reply to the aforementioned letter from the Chair of the ERW Scrutiny Councillor Group.

RESOLVED that

5.1. The correspondence be received;



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5.2. The Chair's draft response letter in reply to the letter from the Chair of the ERW Scrutiny Councillor Group be approved.

6. ERW UPDATE

The Joint Committee received an update presentation on the following key areas;

- ERW Strategy Groups
- ESTYN Thematic Report
- ERW Professional Learning Offer
- Curriculum for Wales
- Secondary Curriculum Support
- Professional Learning and Research
- Equity and Wellbeing
- Leadership
- Digital Skills
- Cymraeg

Several comments were made thanking ERW for their valuable work in supporting schools during the pandemic.

In response to a query, Members were advised that the level of engagement with live and on-demand resources would be monitored.

RESOLVED that the update presentation be received.

7. CONSORTIUM DEVELOPMENTS

The Joint Committee received a progress report on Consortium Developments.

Members were advised that Directors had agreed a draft mission statement including key principles, core aims and values for the new ERW model as detailed in the report. Legal officers were developing a draft legal agreement for the future arrangements.

The Lead Director had requested all LAs to confirm what services would be required at a local level, whether the LA intended to join the new Consortium and what commissioned services would be required if they did not wish to join the new Consortium. The Joint Committee was advised that a response from NPT was still outstanding. Once this had been received, the draft legal agreement could be progressed and a costing structure for the new model developed. Independent legal advice was being sought from public procurement specialists in relation to commissioning and potential implications on statutory responsibilities for school improvements.

The meeting was advised that Ceredigion County Council would not be joining the new model but was looking to commission services in the future. Carmarthenshire



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County Council and Swansea Council would temporarily rescind their notice to leave the Consortium to facilitate an extension of the new implementation date to 31 August 2021.

Several comments were made welcoming the extension of the implementation date to 31 August 2021 to minimise financial risks and provide stability during the pandemic.

RESOLVED that the date for the dissolution / termination of ERW and the implementation of a new Consortium model be extended to 31 August 2021.

8. FINANCE UPDATE 2020-21

The Joint Committee received a presentation on the ERW Financial Update 2020-21 as at 31 December 2020, relating to the following areas:

- Central Team Budget
- Service Level Agreements
- Local Authority Contributions
- Grant Allocations
- Pupil Development Grant (PDG)
- Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant (RCSIG)
- Grants - Business Plan Priorities
- Risks
- Reserves
- Recommendations

The Joint Committee was advised that SLAs remained unchanged and all LA contributions for 2020/21 had been received.

Grant allocations remained largely unchanged with the exception of a variation letter providing an additional £35k for Supporting Adopted Learners and NPEP Funding. The projected outturn is a £229k underspend, mainly due to staff vacancies and new ways of working during the pandemic.

£10k had been added to the budget to cover the legal costs of the forthcoming changes to ERW, based on an estimate provided to the Lead Director of Education. This cost was covered through savings found elsewhere within the core funded budget.

With regard to School Improvement Budgeted Expenditure, strategy groups were on track to spend the remaining budget in accordance with agreed priorities. Risks continued to be identified around dependency on grants, the future ERW footprint and diminishing reserves.

RESOLVED that

8.1. The updated ERW financial position at 31 December 2020 be noted;



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8.2. The amendments to the Central Team budget for 2020-21, namely the legal costs for the anticipated changes to ERW, be approved.

9. ERW RISK REGISTER

The Joint Committee received the Risk Register detailing the main strategic business risks to ERW's objectives. It was advised that the risks in relation to qualifications 2021 had been updated to reflect recent Welsh Government announcements.

RESOLVED that

9.1. The change in risk profile be noted;

9.2. The risk register be received.

10. INTERNAL AUDIT WORK PLAN

The Joint Committee received a report on the Internal Audit Work Programme for 2020/21.

Members were advised that the Programme had been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and had been developed in consultation with the Lead Chief Executive, Lead Director, Section 151 Officer, Monitoring Officer and Interim Chief Officers.

RESOLVED that the Internal Audit Programme for 2020/21 be approved.

11. ANY OTHER ITEMS OF BUSINESS THAT BY REASONS OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES THE CHAIR DECIDES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY PURSUANT TO SECTION 100(4)(B) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

There were no items of urgent business.

CHAIR

DATE

